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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The two Federal Chambers (National and States Council) assembled on the 14th of this month, as one body (Vereinigte Bundesversammlung) in order to elect a successor to Federal-Councillor Dr. Celio, who is shortly assuming the post of Swiss Minister in Rome.

The Assembly was presided over by J. Schmid, President of the Swiss National Council. The Federal Chancellor read out the letter of resignation of Dr. Celio, in which he announced his nomination as diplomatic representative of the Confederation to Rome, and in which he expressed his thanks to the members of the two Chambers for the always ready support which they had given him during the tenure of his office, concluding with his best wishes to the country and its people.

The President of the National Council expressed the thanks of the Assembly to Federal-Councillor Celio for the good and faithful services which he had rendered to the country during the last ten years as a member of the Federal Government, extending to him their best wishes in his new mission to preserve and develop the friendly relations between Italy and Switzerland.

Dr. Celio then expressed his thanks to the Speaker, in his native tongue, for the friendly tribute paid to him, and concluded his address with his best wishes for the future welfare of our country.

The Assembly then proceeded with the election. A joint proposal by the catholic-conservative, radical-democrat, socialist, peasant and bourgeois and liberal parties favoured the candidature of National-Councillor, Dr. h.c. Josef Escher (Brig).

219 voting papers were distributed and 219 were returned of which 22 blank, 197 were valid and the necessary absolute majority was 99.

Dr. J. Escher was elected with 165 votes.

Thirty-two votes were recorded in favour of the following candidates: Maspoli (Ticino); 17; Condrau (Grisons); 8, Various: 7.

Amidst great applause, Dr. Escher declared that he would accept the election, thanking the Assembly for

the honour thus bestowed on him. He said, that he considered his nomination primarily as a compliment to his native canton (Valais) which for the first time in the history of the Confederation was allotted a seat in the Federal Government. After having declared his intention to serve the country to the best of his ability in his high office, he took the oath.

* * *

Federal Councillor, Joseph Escher, was born on the 17th of September, 1885, in Simplon-Dorf (Ct. Valais). He studied *juris prudence* at the Universities of Berne and Berlin after which he established himself as a lawyer and notary in Brig. From 1912 — 1920, Escher was a member of the Municipal Council of Brig and from 1920 — 1928 he occupied the post of President of the Urban Council of Glis-Brig. He sat from 1915 — 1932 in the Grand Council of the canton of Valais as a representative of the catholic-conservative party.

In 1931, he entered the cantonal government, and three years later (1934) Dr. Escher was elected President of the government of the canton of Valais. In 1925, he was elected a Member of Parliament (National Council) in which he sat from 1925 — 1932 and again since 1936. In 1948/49 he presided over the National Council. Escher has been since 1946 President of the Conservative Popular Party of Switzerland, and is a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Fribourg.

Federal Councillor, Dr. J. Escher, is no stranger to the Swiss Colony in London; on the occasion of a visit to this country as a Member of the Swiss Parliamentary Delegation in May of last year, he attended a dinner given to the said Delegation by the City Swiss Club, on May 6th at the Dorchester Hotel, he was also present at a luncheon held in honour of the Swiss Parliamentarians by the Anglo-Swiss Society at the Dorchester Hotel on which occasion the Rt. Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, P.C., M.P., presided. During his stay in

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London he paid a visit to the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society, at 35, Fitzroy Square.

* * *

The election of Dr. Escher has evoked great satisfaction and joy throughout the canton of Valais. As soon as the election became known in Sitten, a salvo of 22 shots was fired, and in the evening all the bells in the cantonal capital, towns, villages and hamlets were rung for ten minutes.

On the day after his election, Federal-Councillor Escher left Berne on his journey to his native canton, receptions were held at Fribourg, St. Maurice, Martigny, Sitten, Siders, Brig and Simplon-Dorf. The members of the cantonal government travelled *in corpore* to St. Maurice to welcome the new member of the Federal government.

* * *

The Swiss Ministers abroad and at present on holiday in Switzerland, were entertained to Luncheon at St. Aubin, by M. Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation. Federal-Councillors von Steiger, Etter and Rubattel, as well as M. J. Humbert, President of the government of the canton of Neuchâtel, were present.

* * *

The Federal Council will be represented by M. Herrmann Schlageter, Swiss Consul in San Salvador, on the occasion of the initiation of the new President of the republic of San Salvador.

Cantonal

Professor, Dr. Walter Zimmerli, dean of the theological faculty of the University of Zurich, has accepted a professorship at the theological faculty of the University of Göttingen (Germany). [A.T.S.]

* * *

Traffic accidents in the canton of Zurich are still on the increase.

During the year 1949, 6,500 accidents have been reported, causing the death of 91 persons; 2,800 persons have been injured. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Emil Heller, a former National Councillor, has celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary in Eglisau (Ct. Zurich).

The "Jubilar", was from 1898-1919 President of the rural council of Eglisau and from 1894-1917 a member of the "Kantonsrat" of Zurich. He entered Parliament in 1928 where he sat until 1935. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Colonel Richard, H. Vogel, a former chief of arms (Waffenchef) of cavalry, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Cham (Ct. Zug).

Colonel Vogel was born in Cham and studied military science at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. In 1904, he was sent, as a member of the Swiss military mission to Japan during the Russian-Japanese war. At the beginning of 1913, Colonel Vogel was appointed "Waffenchef" of cavalry and during the first world war was in command of a cavalry division. The "Jubilar" was one of the pioneers of the rowing, football and horse sports in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

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On the occasion of promoting the village of Moutier (Jura) to the status of town (inhabitants over 6,000), the "Tribune Jurassiens" has issued a special number, dealing with the development of this industrial centre. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the month of August, 1950, 525 (1949:452) traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne. 401 (1949:370) persons were injured, 12 (1949:13), of whom succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Edouard Fallet, born on October 25th, 1904, in Dombression (Ct. Neuchâtel) has been appointed head of the section "commercial service of passenger traffic", of the Swiss Federal Railways. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mme. Rosina Waber of Kiesen (Ct. Berne) has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

* * *

On the occasion of the 75th birthday anniversary of Professor, Dr. h. c. Josef Reinhart, the well-known poet and author, and citizen of Solothurn, the cantonal government has addressed a letter of congratulation and appreciation to him. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor, Dr. Rud. Thommen, of Basle, has been nominated an honorary member of the "Allgemeinen Geschichtsforschenden Gesellschaft der Schweiz."

[A.T.S.]

Dr. Karl Sartorius, Publisher of the "Basler Nachrichten" and a member of the Board of the "Buchdruckerei zum Basler Berichtshaus, A.G." has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary in Basle.

Dr. Alfred Stückelberg, a lawyer, and son of the well-known painter Ernst Stückelberg, is eighty years old. He was for many years Portuguese Consul, and President of the "Schweiz. Anwaltskammer."

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Georg Fischer, A.G. Stahlwerke (Schaffhausen)" have honoured about 100 members of their staff — numbering 4,500 — who have been 25 years in their service.

More than 450 persons employed by this concern, assembled in Schwyz, where an address was given by M. E. Müller, a member of the Board. Each of the men celebrating this jubilee was presented with a present by M. E. Homberger, President of the Board.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

In remembrance of the 1st ascent of the Piz Bernina by Dr. Joh. Coaz and his two companions, on September 13th, 1850, the section Bernina of the Swiss Alpine Club, held a commemoration service at the Roval hut, in the presence of about 200 alpinists.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Kadettenkorps" Zofingen has celebrated the 125th Jubilee of its foundation. [A.T.S.]

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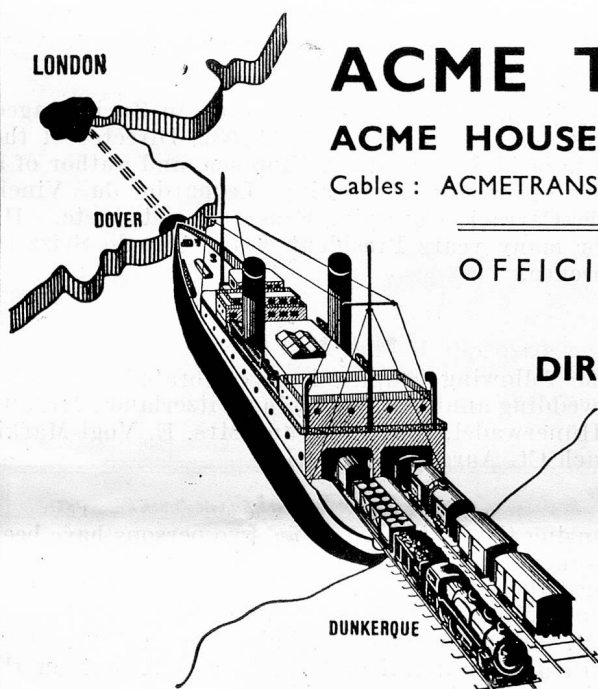
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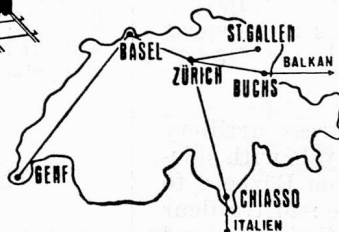
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M. Robert Monnet, Editor-in-chief of the "Tribune de Lausanne", has celebrated his 25th service jubilee. M. Monnet, who already held the post of editor of the paper from 1914-16, was appointed Editor-in-chief in 1925, in succession to M. Hirzel. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The 31st Comptoir Suisse was opened on the 9th of this month at Lausanne. M. M. Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation was one of the principal speakers at the official banquet. He reaffirmed Switzerland's "armed neutrality" policy, which is expected to cost about two-thirds more next year than the total of over £38,000,000 voted for 1950. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Minister in Paris and Madame de Salis have been nominated honorary citizens of Mont-sur-Rolle (Ct. Vaud). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The French pianist, Alfred Cortot, who was born in Nyon in 1877, has been made an honorary citizen of Nyon. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A serious accident happened on the road between Gletsch and Oberwald (Ct. Valais) when a motor-car containing five passengers skidded and fell into a 60m. deep ravine.

One woman passenger, Mme. Liena Rieter (aged 60), from Horgen (Zurich) was killed, the following, all living at Horgen, received injuries: Rudolf Rieter (husband) Mme. Klara Birrer and Anton Rupf. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The castle of Promenthoux, on the Lac Léman, belonging to Count Bendern, was destroyed by fire.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

According to official figures just published, the population of the canton of Geneva on the 31st of August, 1950, numbered 205,676, of whom 148,453 are living in the town of Geneva. Together with the suburbs Carouge, Chênes-Bourgeries, Lancy and Vernier, the population of the town of Geneva numbers 171,477.

[A.T.S.]

Army

Mr. Kobelt, chief of the Federal Military Department, at a Press conference during the annual manoeuvres of the 1st Army Corps, emphasized the necessity of strengthening Swiss national defences and of supplying the Army with modern weapons. He said much had already been done and new guns and shells capable of piercing armour plates 12in. thick had been made, but anti-tank defence must be developed and reinforced. He announced that the Government will ask Parliament for a credit of 1,400m. Swiss francs to be spent on a four-year programme.

* * *

Two soldiers belonging to the fortress artillery company 12, were killed when a motor-bicycle with side-car overturned at a bend on the road from Bözberg to Andermatt, the names of the victims are: Mitrailleur Markus Müller, of Wangen, near Olten (aged 21), and motor-cyclist Walter Kull of Zurich (aged 47). [A.T.S.]

Economics

Switzerland and Mexico have signed a two-year agreement to give each other most-favoured-nation treatment in their trade exchanges.

Switzerland imported Mexican goods last year to the value of about 16.8 million francs (about £1,400,000), mostly cotton and lead. Mexico took Swiss goods to the value of some 31.3 million francs (about £2,600,000), mostly watches, medical supplies and dyes.

The pact has still to be ratified by the two Parliaments.

* * *

The Four per Cent. 50 million Swiss francs loan issued some time ago in Switzerland on behalf of the Netherlands State will shortly be introduced on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange on behalf of holders of Swiss franc securities.

—————:o:—————

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Paul Baillod, a lawyer and notary of Neuchâtel, in Neuchâtel, at the age of 65. The deceased was President of the Chamber of advocates from 1946-48, and an international Governor of the Rotary Club.

Heinrich Züst, for many years head of the banking house Falck & Cie, of Lucerne, and President of the Board of the "Dampfschiffgesellschaft des Vierwaldstättersees", in Lucerne, aged 72.

Xaver Gasser-Bürgler, for a number of years President of the community of Schwyz, and President of the "Sparkasse der Gemeinde Schwyz", in Schwyz, at the age of 43.

Dr. Heinrich Bodmer-von Arnim, in Zurich, aged 65. The deceased was from 1922-1932, Director of the Institute of historical art in Florence, and author of a number of works concerning Leonardo da Vinci, Lodovic Carracci, Corregio, Feuerbach, etc., etc. He was for many years President of the Circolo Svizzero in Florence.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. Hünerwadel, Basle, Mr. and Mrs. E. Vogt-Märki, Mandach Ct. Aargau. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the past three weeks two persons have been killed and two seriously injured in Alpine accidents. Amongst those killed was the 40 years old Fritz Nüssli, of Thun, who fell 300 ft. while ascending the Simmenfluh. J. Geiger, aged 30, a technician from Winterthur, was killed after a fall of 90ft. in an attempt on the Kreuzberg (Ct. Appenzell), his fiancée was injured.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Thirty children from London and the Home Counties, Leeds and Hull, many of them war orphans or with only one parent living, have arrived at the Pestalozzi village at Trogen (Ct. Appenzell). Some of

the children, 16 boys and 14 girls, their ages ranging from nine to thirteen years, are from large families.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss cost of living index for July this year remained unchanged at 158.4 (basis August 1939 = 100) in comparison with the previous month's figure.

* * *

The Department of Education of the Canton of Neuchâtel has recently adopted rather severe and unusual measures in an effort to tighten up discipline among children and young persons.

It has drawn up a model type of regulation affecting the out-of-school behaviour of all young people under the age of 18 years which can be accepted by the school committees as it stands or modified to suit local circumstances. According to this regulation all children of compulsory school age must abstain from attending or participating in boxing competitions or exhibitions and other similar shows. During the winter months, from November 1st to the end of the school year in spring, they must not stay out of their homes after 8 p.m. or after 9 p.m. during the rest of the year, except in very special cases. Children under nine years of age are not to be allowed to join youth groups or similar organizations.

* * *

The death is reported of Eugene Aufranc, aged 100, of Orvin, the oldest watchmaker in the world.

* * *

The recent election of a new Federal Councillor has stirred up quite some interest among our readers, particularly as to the age of Switzerland's "Landesväter". Information is given below:

		<i>Born</i>	<i>Elected</i>
Etter	...	1891	1934
Celio	...	1889	1940
von Steiger	...	1881	1940
Kobelt	...	1891	1940
Nobs	...	1886	1943
Petitpierre	...	1899	1944
Rubattel	...	1896	1947

* * *

The Swiss Federal Government approved measures that are to be put into force immediately to weed out "doubtful" officials and workers from the Civil Ser-

vice and from Government undertakings. The measures will affect those employees who might be induced by their political beliefs to support the action of a fifth column.

Recent cases have proved that there are such people in State employment, and in a period of insecurity such as the present one the Government can no longer tolerate their presence. They will be discharged as soon as possible, but those who, though of doubtful loyalty, are not dangerous for the time being will be provisionally maintained in office with short contracts.

* * *

By skillfully transplanting skin from one boy to another, fifty-year-old Sir Archibald McIndoe, the British plastic surgeon, has helped to establish beyond doubt that six-year-old "twins" were mixed up as babies in Switzerland. As a result two mothers have "swopped" sons.

The astonishing story began when a Swiss and his wife were proudly watching their six-year-old twins, Victor and Pierre, marching hand in hand in a procession of Swiss children. They suddenly noticed that a boy named Eric who was walking a short distance behind the twins was extraordinarily like Victor.

But it was when Eric grinned that they began to think seriously about the resemblance; for Eric had a wide gap between his lower front teeth — and so had Victor. Then they discovered that Eric had been born on the same night and in the same maternity home as their own sons.

The terrible thought flashed through their minds: "Is Pierre somebody else's child who was accidentally substituted for Eric by the nurses?" When they showed Victor to Eric's mother, a widow, she began to worry also. Authorities and experts got busy.

The fingerprints, eye colours, hair characters and teeth arrangements of the three boys were carefully recorded, and results supported the belief that Victor and Eric were the real twins. Blood tests of the boys and their parents followed. But as the man whom Eric called father was dead, obviously these tests could not be regarded as conclusive.

Then one of the scientists had a brainwave. He recalled that although human skin differs so much that it cannot normally be grafted from one person to another, grafting was usually possible between twins. The services of a British plastic surgeon were enlisted.

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He removed a small square of skin from Victor's right arm and replaced it with a skin graft from Eric.

This left no doubt in the minds of the authorities that a terrible error had been made. For the skin transplanted from Victor to Eric and vice versa quickly grafted on, leaving no scar; its texture and hair growth were retained. But attempted grafts between Pierre and the other youngsters failed.

The authorities ordered that Eric and Pierre should be exchanged at once. All three parents experienced the terrible wrench of parting, but the boys have adapted themselves astonishingly well to this strange change in their young lives.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

La première fabrique d'amiante de l'Etat d'Israël a été entièrement équipée avec des machines commandées en Suisse. Le plus grand élévateur à céréales du Moyen-Orient a été commandé à la maison Bühler frères d'Uzwil.

L'une des plus grandes attractions de la foire de Toronto (Canada) a été le pavillon de l'horlogerie suisse.

A la demande du gouvernement Turc, Monsieur A. Kasper, ingénieur des PTT suisses va passer une ou deux années à Istanbul en qualité d'expert dans le domaine des installations et de la technique des transmissions.

Sept architectes suisses ayant participé à un concours d'idées pour l'aménagement de la capitale suédoise ont reçu des prix se montant à 7,000 couronnes. 195 architectes, venant de 33 pays, étaient sur les rangs.

Des représentants des bureaux de voyages anglais ont visité les principaux centres touristiques du Valais. De hauts fonctionnaires du Ministère français des travaux publics, accompagnés de délégués des principales sociétés de chemins de fer et de transport, ont fait un voyage d'étude à travers les Grisons. 86 personnes participant aux Semaines artistiques internationales ont visité Coire.

Pour la première fois un drame musical va être joué au théâtre royal de Copenhague. Il s'agit de "Jeanne d'Arc" d'Arthur Honegger.

Le pianiste Paul Baumgartner, l'artiste suisse le plus connu des Pays-Bas, a de nouveau remporté un succès triomphal au cours des concerts d'abonnement d'été, à Scheveningen.

Le Prof. Schönberg de Bâle a été nommé membre d'honneur de la Société allemande de médecine légale et sociale.

Invité au cours alpin de la 3ème Division, le journaliste norvégien Tor Skyervagen fait part, dans son rapport, de l'admiration que lui causent nos soldats des troupes de montagne. Leurs prouesses sont étonnantes. Seul le rappel de corde n'est pas dans ses goûts.

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